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**Jack Brown in
prison**

London

[179-?]

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CHEAP REPOSITORY.

JACK BROWN in Prison;

O R,

The PITCHER never goes so often to the Well but
it is broke at last.

Being the FOURTH PART of the HISTORY of the
TWO SHOEMAKERS.



Sold by J. MARSHALL,
(Printer to the CHEAP REPOSITORY for Religious and Moral Tracts) No. 17, Queen-Street, Cheapside, and No. 4, Aldermay Church-Yard, and R. WHITE, Piccadilly, LONDON.

By S. HAZARD, at Bath, and by all Booksellers, Newsmen, and Hawkers, in Town and Country. Great Allowance will be made to Shopkeepers and Hawkers.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

[*Entered at Stationer's Hall.*]

HISTORY, &c.

I HOPE the reader has not forgotten where the third part of this history left off last month. It finished with an account how Jack Brown, by keeping idle company, when he should have been paying his debts, was robbed of his pocket-book while he was asleep on the settle at the Blue Posts. It was also told how, the Landlord not believing one word of his story, sent him to prison for debts long due to him.

Brown was no sooner lodged in his doleful habitation, and a little recovered from his first surprise, than he sat down and wrote his friend Stock the whole history of the transaction.

Stock was too angry with what had happened to answer Brown's letter, or to seem to take the least notice of him. However, he kindly and secretly undertook a journey to the hard-hearted old Farmer, Brown's father, to intercede with him, and to see if he would do any thing for his son.

But all his pleas were urged in vain. The Farmer was not to be moved. Indeed he argued with some reason, that he ought not to make his industrious children beggars to save one rogue from the gallows. Mr. Stock allowed the force of this reason, though he saw the father was less influenced by this principle of justice than by resentment on account of the old story of Smiler.

Mr. Stock at length wrote to poor Jack; not to offer him any help, that was quite out of the question, but "to exhort him to repent of his evil ways; to lay before him the sins of his past life, and to advise him to convert the present punishment into a benefit, by humbling himself before God."

If Mr. Stock had sent him a good sum of money

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to procure his liberty, or even a trifle to make merry with his wretched companions, Jack would have thought him a friend indeed. But to send him nothing but dry advice, and a few words of empty comfort, was, he thought, but a cheap shabby way of shewing his kindness. Unluckily the letter came just as he was going to sit down to one of those direful merry-makings which are often carried on with brutal riot within the doleful walls of a jail on the entrance of a new prisoner, who is often expected to give a feast to the rest.

When his companions were heated with gin, "Now," said Jack, "I'll treat you with a sermon, and a very pretty preachment it is." So saying he took out Mr. Stock's kind and pious letter, and was delighted at the bursts of laughter it produced. "What a canting dog," said one! "Repentance, indeed!" cried Tom Crew, "No, no, Jack, tell this hypocritical rogue that if we have lost our liberty, it is only for having been jolly, hearty fellows, and we have more spirit than repent of that I hope: all the harm we have done is living a little too fast, like honest bucks as we are." "Aye, aye," said Jolly George, "had we been such sneaking miserly fellows as Stock, we need not have come hither. But if the ill-nature of the laws has clapped up such fine hearty blades, we are no *felons* however. We are afraid of no Jack Ketch; and I see no cause to repent of any sin that's not hanging matter. For those who are thrust into the condemned hole indeed, and have but a few hours to live, they *must* see the Parson, and hear a sermon, and such stuff. But I do not know what such stout young fellows as we are have to do with repentance. And so, Jack, let

us have that rare new catch which you learnt of the strollers that merry night when you lost your pocket-book."

Brown spent one part of his time in thoughtless riot, and the other in gloom and sadness. Company kept up his spirits; with his new friends he contrived to drown thought; but when he was alone he began to find that a *merry fellow*, when deprived of his companions and his liquor, is often a most forlorn wretch. Then it is, that even a merry fellow says of laughter, "What is it? and of mirth it is madness."

As he contrived, however, to be as little alone as possible, his gaiety was commonly uppermost, till that loathsome distemper, called the Jail Fever, broke out in the prison. He soon caught the distemper, and that in so dreadful a degree, that his life was in great danger. He lay in the most deplorable condition; his body tormented with a dreadful disease, and his soul terrified and amazed at the approach of death; that death, which he thought at so great a distance, and of which his comrades had assured him, that a young fellow of five and twenty was in no danger. Poor Jack! I cannot help feeling for him. (Without a shilling! without a friend! without one comfort respecting this world, and, what is far more terrible, without one hope respecting the next.

A Christian friend generally comes forward at the very time when worldly friends forsake the wretched. The other prisoners would not come near Brown, though he had often entertained and never offended them, even his own father was not moved with his sad condition. When Mr. Stock informed him of it, he answered, "'tis no more than he deserves. As he brews so he must bake.

He has made his own bed, and let him lie in it." The hard old man had ever at his tongue's end some proverb which he contrived to turn in such a way as to excuse himself.

We shall now see how Mr. Stock behaved. He had his favourite sayings too, but they were chiefly on the side of kindness, mercy, or some other virtue. "I must not," said he, "pretend to call myself a Christian, if I do not requite evil with good." When he received the jailer's letter with the account of Brown's sad condition, Will Simpson and Tommy Williams began to compliment him on his own wisdom and prudence, by which he had escaped Brown's misfortunes. He only gravely said, "Blessed be God that I am not in the same misery. It is He who has made us to differ. But for His grace I might have been in no better condition. Now Brown is brought low by the hand of God, it is my time to go to him." "What you," said Will, "whom he cheated of your money?" "This is not a time to remember injuries," said Mr. Stock. "How can I ask forgiveness for my own sins, if I withhold forgiveness from him?" So saying, he ordered his horse, and set off to see poor Brown, thus proving that his was a religion not of words but of deeds.

Stock's heart nearly failed him as he passed through the prison. The groans of the sick and dying, and what to such a heart as his was still more moving, the brutal merriment of the healthy in such a place, pierced his very soul. Many a silent prayer did he put as he passed along, that God would yet be pleased to touch their hearts, and that "now (during this infectious sickness) might be the accepted time." The jailer observed

him drop a tear, and asked the cause. "I cannot forget," said he, "that the most dissolute of these is still my fellow-creature. The same God made them; the same SAVIOUR died for them; how then can I hate the worst of them? With my advantages they might have been much better than I am; without the blessing of God on my good Minister's instructions, I might have been worse than the worst of these. I have no cause for pride, much for thankfulness; *let us not be high-minded; but fear.*"



It would have moved a heart of stone to have seen poor miserable Jack Brown lying on his wretched bed, his face so changed by pain, poverty, dirt and sorrow, that he could hardly be known for that "merry soul of a jack boot," as he used to be proud to hear himself called. His groans were so piteous that it made Mr. Stock's heart ach. He kindly took him by the hand, though

he knew the distemper was catching. "How dost do Jack?" said he, "dost know me?" Brown shook his head and said faintly, "know you? aye, that I do. I am sure I have but one friend in the world who would come to see me in this woeful condition. O James! what have I brought myself to? What will become of my poor soul? I dare not look back, for that is all sin, nor forwards, for that is all misery and woe."

Mr. Stock spoke kindly to him, but did not attempt to cheer him with false comfort, as is too often done. "I am ashamed to see you in this dirty place," says Brown. "As to the place Jack," replied the other, "if it has helped to bring you to a sense of your past offences, it will be no bad place for you. I am heartily sorry for your distress and your sickness; - but if it should please God by them to open your eyes, and to shew you that sin is a greater evil than the prison to which it has brought you, all may yet be well; I had rather see you in this humble penitent state, lying on this dirty bed, in this dismal prison, than roaring and rioting at the Greyhound, the king of the company, with handsome cloaths on your back, and plenty of money in your pocket."

Brown wept bitterly and squeezed his hand, but was too weak to say much. Mr. Stock then desired the jailor to let him have such things as were needful and he would pay for them. He would not leave the poor fellow till he had given him with his own hands some broth which the jailor had got ready for him, and some medicines which the Doctor had sent. All this kindness cut Brown to the heart. He was just able to sob out "my unnatural father leaves me to perished; and my injured friend is more than a father to me." Stock told

him that one proof he must give of his repentance was, that he must forgive his father, whose provocation had been very great. He then said he would leave him for the present to take some rest, and desired him to lift up his heart to God for mercy. "Dear James," replied Brown, "do you pray for me? God perhaps may hear you, but he will never hear the prayer of such a sinner as I have been." Take care how you think so," said Stock. "To believe that God cannot forgive you would be still a greater sin than any you have yet committed against him." He then explained to him in a few words, as well as he was able, the nature of repentance, and forgiveness through a Saviour, and warned him earnestly against unbelief and hardness of heart.

Poor Jack grew much refreshed in body with the comfortable things he had taken; and a little cheered with Stock's kindness in coming so far to see, and to forgive such a forlorn outcast, sick of an infectious distemper, and locked within the walls of a prison. "Surely" said he to himself, "there must be some mighty power in a religion which can lead men to do such things! things so much against the grain as to forgive such an injury, and to risk catching such a distemper," but he was so weak he could not express this in words. He tried to pray, but he could not, at length, overpowered with weariness, he fell asleep.

When Mr. Stock came back, he was surprised to find him so much better in body; but his agonies of mind were dreadful, and he had now got strength to express part of the horrors which he felt. "James," said he, (looking wildly) "it is all over with me. I am a lost creature. Even your prayers cannot save me." "Dear Jack,

replied Mr. Stock, "I am no minister; it does not become me to talk much to thee: but I know I may venture to say whatever is in the Bible. As ignorant as I am I shall be safe enough while I stick to that." "Aye," said the sick man, "you used to be ready enough to read to me, and I would not listen, or if I did it was only to make fun of what I heard, and now you will not so much as read a bit of a chapter to me."

This was the very point to which Stock longed to bring him. So he took a little Bible out of his pocket, which he always took with him on a journey, and read slowly verse by verse, the 55th chapter of Isaiah. When he came to the sixth and seventh verses, poor Jack cried so much that Stock was forced to stop. The words were, "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord." Here Brown stopped him, saying "Oh it is too late, too late for me." "Let me finish the verse," said Stock, "and you will see your error; you will see that it is never too late." So he read on—"let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." Here Brown started up, snatched the book out of his hand and cried out, "Is that really there? No, no; that's of your own putting in, in order to comfort me; let me look at the words myself." "No, indeed," said Stock, "I would not for the world give you unfounded comfort, or put off any notion of my own for a scripture doctrine." "But is it possible!" cried the sick man, "that God may really pardon me? Do st think he can? Do st think he will?" "I am sure of it," said Stock; "I dare not give thee false hopes, or, indeed any hopes of my own. But

these are God's own words, and the only difficulty is to know when we are really brought into such a state as that the words may be applied to us.

Mr. Stock was afraid of saying more. He would not venture out of his depth; nor, indeed, was poor Brown able to bear more discourse just now. So he made him a present of the Bible, folding down such places as he thought might be best suited to his state, and took his leave, being obliged to return home that night. He left a little money with the jailor, to add a few comforts to the allowance of the prison, and promised to return in a short time.

When he got home, he described the sufferings and misery of Brown in a very moving manner; but Tommy Williams, instead of being properly affected at it, only said, "Indeed, Master, I am not very sorry; he is rightly served:" "How, Tommy," said Mr. Stock, rather sternly, "not sorry to see a fellow creature brought to the lowest state of misery? one too whom you have known so prosperous?" "No, Master, I can't say I am; for Mr. Brown used to make fun of you, and laugh at you for being so godly, and reading your Bible."

"Let me say a few words to you Tommy," said Mr. Stock. "In the first place you should never watch for the time of a man's being brought low by trouble to tell of his faults. Next, you should never rejoice at his trouble, but pity him, and pray for him. Lastly, as to his ridiculing me for my religion, if I cannot stand an idle jest, I am not worthy the name of a Christian.—*He that is ashamed of me and my word, do't remember what follows, Tommy?*" "Yes, Master, 'twas last Sunday's text," —*of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall judge the world.*

Mr. Stock soon went back to the prison. But he did not go alone. He took with him Mr. Thomas, the worthy Minister who had been the guide and instructor of his youth, who was so kind as to go at his request and visit this forlorn prisoner. When they got to Brown's door, they found him sitting up in his bed with the Bible in his hand. This was a joyful sight to Mr. Stock, who secretly thanked God for it. Brown was reading aloud; they listened; it was the fifteenth of Saint Luke. The circumstances of this beautiful Parable of the Prodigal Son were so much like his own, that the story pierced him to the soul; and he stopped every minute to compare his own case with that of the Prodigal. He was just got to the eighteenth verse, *I will arise and go to my father*,—at that moment he spied his two friends; joy darted into his eyes. "O dear Jem," said he, "it is not too late, I will arise and go to my father, my heavenly father, and you, Sir, will shew me the way, won't you?" said he to Mr. Thomas, whom he recollected. "I am very very glad to see you in so hopeful a disposition," said the good Minister. "O, Sir," said Brown, "what a place is this to receive you in! O, see to what I have brought myself!"

"Your condition, as to this world, is indeed very low," replied the good Divine. "But what are mines, dungeons, or gallies, to that eternal hopeless prison to which your unrepented sin must soon have consigned you. Even in this gloomy prison, on this bed of straw, worn down by pain, poverty, and want, forsaken by your worldly friends, an object of scorn to those with whom you used to carouse and riot, yet here, I say, brought thus low, if you have at last found out your own wretchedness, and your utterly undone state by sin, you

may still be more an object of favour in the sight of God, than when you thought yourself prosperous and happy; when the world smiled upon you, and you passed your days and nights in envied, giddy and unchristian riot. If you will but improve the present awful visitation; if you do but heartily renounce and abhor your present evil courses; if you even now turn to the Lord your Savior with lively faith, deep repentance, and unfeigned obedience, I shall still have more hope of you than of many who are going on quite happy, because quite insensible. The heavy laden sinner, who has discovered the iniquity of his own heart, and his utter inability to help himself, may be still restored to God's favour, and become happy, though in a dungeon. And be assured, that he who from deep and humble contrition dares not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, when with a hearty faith he sighs out, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*, shall in no wise be cast out. These are the words of him who cannot lie."

It is impossible to describe the self-abasement, the grief, the joy, the shame, the hope, and the fear which filled the mind of this poor man. A dawn of comfort at length shone on his benighted mind. His humility and fear of falling back into his former sins; if he should ever recover, Mr. Thomas thought were good symptoms of a sound repentance. He improved and cherished every good disposition he saw arising in his heart, and particularly warned him against self-deceit, self-confidence and hypocrisy.

One day, when Mr. Thomas and Mr. Stock came to see him, they found him more than commonly affected. His face was more ghastly pale than usual, and his eyes were red with crying, as if he

"Sir," said he, "what a sight have I just seen! Jolly George, as we used to call him, the ring-leader of all our mirth, who was at the bottom of all the fun, and tricks, and wickedness that are carried on within these walls, Jolly George is just dead of the jail distemper! He taken, and I left! I *would* be carried into his room to speak to him, to beg him to take warning by me, and that I might take warning by him. But what did I see! what did I hear! not one sign of repentance; not one dawn of hope. Agony of body, blasphemies on his tongue, despair in his soul, while I am spared and comforted with hopes of mercy and acceptance. Oh, if all my old friends at the Greyhound could but then have seen Jolly George! A hundred Sermons about Death, Sir, don't speak so home, and cut so deep; as the sight of one dying sinner."

Brown grew gradually better in his health, that is, the fever mended, but the distemper settled in his limbs, so that he seemed likely to be a poor, weakly cripple the rest of his life. But as he spent much of his time in prayer, and in reading such parts of the Bible as Mr. Thomas directed, he improved every day in knowledge and piety, and of course grew more resigned to pain and infirmity.

Some months after this, this hard-hearted father, who had never been prevailed upon to see him, or offer him the least relief, was taken off suddenly by a fit of apoplexy; and, after all his threatenings, he died without a will. He was one of those silly, superstitious men, who fancy they shall die the sooner for having made one; and who love the world and the things that are in the world so dearly, that they dread to set about any business which may put them in mind that they are not always to live in it. As, by this neglect, his father

had not fulfilled his threat of cutting him off with a shilling. Jacky, of course, went shares with his brothers in what their father left. What fell to him proved to be just enough to discharge him from prison, and to pay all his debts, but he had nothing left. His joy at being thus enabled to make restitution was so great, that he thought little of his own wants. He did not desire to conceal the most trifling debt, nor to keep a shilling for himself.

Mr. Stock undertook to settle all his affairs. There did not remain money enough, after every creditor was satisfied, even to pay for his removal to his own town. Mr. Stock kindly sent his own cart for him with a bed in it, made as comfortable as possible, for he was too weak and lame to be removed any other way, and Mr. Stock gave the driver a particular charge to be tender and careful of him, and not to drive hard nor to leave the cart a moment.

Mr. Stock would fain have taken him into his own house, at least for a time, so convinced was he of his sincere reformation both of heart and life; but Brown would not be prevailed on to be further burdensome to this generous friend. He insisted on being carried to the parish work-house, which he said was a far better place than he deserved. In this house Mr. Stock furnished a small room for him, and sent him every day a morsel of meat from his own dinner. Tommy Williams begged that he might always be allowed to carry it, as some atonement for his having for a moment so far forgotten his duty, as rather to rejoice than sympathize in Brown's misfortunes. He never thought of this fault without sorrow, and often thanked his master for the wholesome lesson he then gave him, and he was the better for it all his life.

Mrs. Stock often carried poor Brown a bit of tea or a bason of good broth herself. He was quite a cripple, and never able to walk out as long as he lived. Mr. Stock, Will Simpson, and Tommy Williams laid their heads together, and contrived a sort of barrow on which he was often carried to Church by some of his poor neighbours, of which Tommy was always one; and he requited their kindness, by reading a good book to them whenever they would call in, or teaching their children to sing Psalms or say the Catechism.



It was no small joy to him thus to be enabled to go to church. Whenever he was carried by the Greyhound he was much moved, and used to put up a prayer full of repentance for the past, and praise for the present.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

This HYMN was frequently sung by JACK BROWN in the
WORKHOUSE.

I.

BEHOLD the wretch whose lust and wine

Have wasted his estate;

He begs a share among the wine,

To taste the husks they eat;

II.

Idie with hunger here he cries;

I starve in foreign lands;

My father's house has large supplies,

And bounteous are his hands.

III.

I'll go, and with a mournful tongue

Fall down before his face,

Father I've done thy justice wrong,

Nor can deserve thy grace.

IV.

He said, and hasten'd to his home,

To seek his father's love;

The father saw the rebel come,

And all his bowels move.

V.

He ran, and fell upon his neck,

Embrac'd and kiss'd his son;

The rebel's heart with sorrow breaks

For sins which he had done.

VI.

"Take off his cloaths of shame and sin,

"(The father gives command,)

"Dress him in garments white and clean,

"With rings adorn his hand.

VII.

"A day of feasting I ordain,

"Let mirth and joy abound,

"My son was dead and lives again,

"Was lost and now is found."

THE END.